



Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to our presentation. Today we are going to discuss elder abuse which is a term used to describe an act that can cause physical, psychological, financial, sexual harm or neglect to an older person. (presenter: explain your role and about your organization)

Tips:

This presentation is geared toward seniors but could be given to community groups or professionals who want to learn about elder abuse. If your audience is seniors, please speak clearly, loudly and allow plenty of time for questions.

Consider showing a film to break things up during your presentation. Some suggestions are:

Witness Justice- An Age for Justice- click on arrow in opening slide to play

Terra Nova- (requires purchase) "What's Age Got to Do With It?" or "A Mother Never Gives Up Hope"

(see Terra Nova catalog for more suggestions)

STATISTICS ON ELDER ABUSE

Abused seniors are
3 times
more likely to die
than non-abused seniors.^[1]

Cognitive decline
is a **risk factor** for elder abuse,
including **financial exploitation**.^[2]

Approximately
1 in 10 seniors
is abused **each year**.^[3]

Abuse seniors are **more likely** to be
placed in nursing homes
than non-abused older adults.^[4]

Elder abuse is **dramatically underreported**.
Only **1 in every 23 cases**
is reported to **Adult Protective Services**.^[5]

Slide 2: Statistics on Elder Abuse

Here are some statistics on elder abuse. Elder abuse triples the risk of premature death of a senior. Cognitive issues are a risk factor for all types of elder abuse. Abused seniors often end up in a nursing home. Statistics say 1 in 10 seniors experience abuse but this number is probably low as many do not report and suffer in silence. These statistics show us it is important to get involved and help seniors get safe as our older population increases. Only 1 in 23 cases are reported to Adult Protective Services.

IMPACT OF ELDER ABUSE

- Suffering, illness, or premature death
- Nursing home and hospital admittance
- Large economic losses
- Caregiver hardship



Slide 3: Impact of Elder Abuse

The impact of elder abuse is far reaching. Premature death, suffering, nursing home or hospital admittance increase with abuse. Financial abuse causes economic losses for elders, families, and government programs such as Medicaid. Caregivers can also suffer mental and physical health issues and economic loss as a result of elder abuse. Elder Abuse touches many aspect of our communities.

TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE

- Physical
- Psychological
- Financial
- Sexual
- Neglect/Abandonment



Slide 4: Types of Elder Abuse

We will be discussing the 5 types of Elder Abuse today. Elder Abuse can affect people of every ethnic background, gender, or financial status. In other words, it can happen to anyone. It is often called “the hidden abuse” because people often don’t see it or recognize that it is happening.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Pushing, shoving, hitting
- Kicking, biting, slapping
- Burning, shaking, pinching
- Punching, physically restraining
- Locking a person up
- Not allowing use of restroom
- Over or under medicating
- Using weapons



Slide 5: Physical Abuse

Physical abuse of seniors is an act, rough treatment or punishment that may result in pain, injury, impairment or death. It can occur in many settings - the elder's home, a friend or family members home, in an institution or hospital setting, just about anywhere.

It can start out as low level abuse such as shoving or kicking and increase to something as extreme as using a weapon. The abuse can result in anything from a bruise in low level cases to death in extreme cases. Sometimes seniors who are physically abused may not recover from injuries and eventually die from the result of complications after the assault. An example of physical abuse is pushing a senior because he/or she is walking too slow causing a fall which in turn results in the senior having bruises and pain.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

- Verbal abuse such as belittling or blaming
- Intimidation and threats (non-verbal and verbal)
- Ridiculing beliefs
- Humiliation
- Isolation
- Stalking



Slide 6: Psychological Abuse

Many victims of psychological abuse say that this is the worst type of abuse and is often a precursor to physical abuse. Psychological abuse is verbal or emotional abuse that causes suffering, pain or distress. Some examples of psychological abuse are: complaining about a senior and blaming a senior for problems or bullying a senior. A mean or hostile look can constitute a threat and thus can be considered non-verbal abuse. Preventing a senior from going to worship services or isolating a senior by not allowing phone calls or visits from friends or family is abusive. Treating the senior as a child, speaking for a senior (if unwanted) when they have the ability to do so for themselves can be a type of abuse. Calling a senior names, acting indifferent to a seniors needs all are forms of abuse. Stalking a senior by harassing them on the internet, in person or by any other means is a form of abuse. Older people may feel they are all alone in this. They may feel ashamed or fear retaliation if they tell someone.

FINANCIAL ABUSE

- Theft of social security/pension check
- Forcing or coercing a senior to withdraw funds
- Deceiving a senior to get money (in person, by phone, mail, computer, radio, or TV)
- Taking a senior's property, jewelry, valuables without consent



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Slide 7: Financial Abuse

Financial abuse is the illegal or improper use of an older person's money or property. An example of this is a senior asking a caregiver to purchase medicine with his/her credit card. The caregiver uses the card to also purchase personal items without the senior's permission.

Another (real life) example occurred in Maryland. Last year there was a case of a stranger taking several seniors to the bank to withdraw money. The abuser was caught on camera and prosecuted.

Currently there are cases of calls from the IRS, Treasury, and other government entities – all are scams to get money. Also be on the lookout for the fake lottery scams. Calls from overseas saying you have won the lottery but must pay money up front to get the winnings. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true - it probably is! See the Elder Justice Initiative Financial Exploitation page for more examples of types of abuse and where to go for help. There are many types of scams.

See the Elder Justice Initiative web page on Financial Abuse for more information.

(tip-use other case examples in the news or from personal knowledge. Ask your audience if they have received calls from the IRS, lotteries or fake organizations)

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Nonconsensual sexual contact
- Forced oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse
- Unwanted touching or fondling
- Exhibitionism or forcing a senior to view or participate in pornography
- Using sexual language



Slide 8: Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is sexual contact or non-contact of any kind with an older person without agreement from that person. Our slide gives some examples of what sexual abuse can be. Sexual abuse of seniors is something people do not want to believe is happening but it is - in private homes, group homes, nursing homes and other locations. Sexual abuse perpetrators aren't interested in the sex act itself - it's all about control and domination. Who better to target than a senior who cannot fight back or a child? Examples of sexual abuse are any unwanted sexual touching, forcing sexual intercourse or other sex acts. A caregiver who bathes a vulnerable senior by roughly washing the genital area is being abusive. A senior who is diagnosed with an STD or HIV when they are not sexually active may be the victim of a sexual assault. A person who is a victim of sexual abuse may not want to disclose information about what is happening - they may be ashamed or afraid of retaliation.

Sexual abuse does not always involve touching it can be forcing a senior to view pornography or taking sexual photos without consent. It can also be speaking suggestively to a senior using sexual language that is unwanted.

NEGLECT AND ABANDONMENT

Failure to provide for the needs of a senior:

- Food
- Shelter
- Clothes
- Hygiene
- Healthcare
- Social interaction
- Desertion of a senior



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Slide 9: Neglect and Abandonment

Neglect is the intentional or unintentional failure or refusal to provide care or help to an older adult when the caregiver is required to do so. It is important for seniors, their friends and associates to watch out for signs of neglect. An empty prescription bottle, a senior who has lost weight, who has broken glasses or whose dentures are missing may be experiencing abuse. An example of intentional neglect is a caretaker who fails to provide for the needs of a senior such as failing to provide meals, or medicines. Failing to clothe, wash, or provide healthy stimulation such as conversation, or social interactions is abusive. A caretaker who leaves, deserts or abandons a senior at the bank, at the emergency room, park or another location for hours is neglectful. A senior left alone who needs help is experiencing neglect.

Sometimes family members or new caregivers do not know how to properly care for someone who is bedridden. An example is a person who does not know how to lift a senior and accidentally drops them. This is unintentional neglect. The caregiver may need some training or respite help. Help is often available from the local Department on Aging. The Elder Justice Initiative has resources. See elderjustice.gov for information.

A person who suspects abuse or neglect should check it out. Make a report to Adult Protective Services if necessary. Reporters can remain anonymous. Police can also be called to do a welfare check or to take a report of abuse. Get Involved –make the call! Check in on the seniors you know.



What are Some of the Warning Signs of Abuse?

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Slide 10: What are Some of the Warning Signs of Abuse?
(tip-Ask your audience for some signs of Physical, Psychological, Financial and Sexual Abuse - some answers are on the next slide).

SOME WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Physical - unexplained bruises, repeated injuries, broken bones
- Psychological - crying, agitated, ashamed, depressed, afraid
- Financial - large bank withdrawals, unpaid bills, missing items
- Sexual - genital-anal trauma, bleeding, STD's, bruising to breasts, painful urination
- Neglect – dehydration, poor hygiene, poor living conditions
- Abandonment – seeing a vulnerable elder left alone in distress

Slide 11: Some Warning Signs of Abuse

(Tip- involve your audience. Ask your audience for warning sign examples of each type of abuse. Point out the slide above and also explain the following): Some of the warning signs of physical abuse are repeated, unexplained bruises or injuries. Open wounds, over- medication , broken glasses, lack of care, marks of restraints on wrists. These are just some of the signs of physical abuse.

A change in an older person's personality, symptoms of depression, and/or anxiety can be signs of emotional abuse. A persons withdrawal from normal activities or acting fearful around certain individuals can also be signs of emotional or psychological abuse.

Large piles of unpaid bills, uncut grass, lots of junk mail, not having enough money to cover food, or medicine costs, letters from the lottery are just some of the signs of financial abuse.

Genital bruising, soreness, STD's in a sexually inactive senior can be signs of sexual abuse.

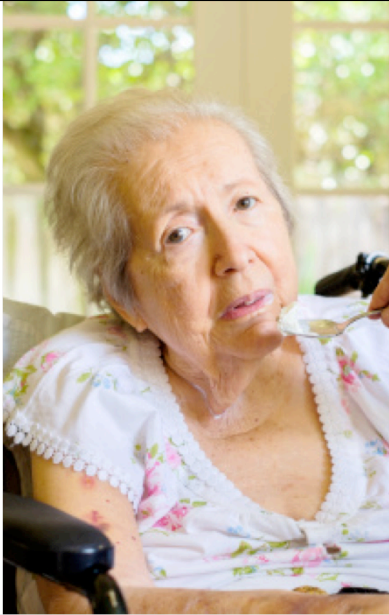
Signs of neglect can be dehydration, weight loss, unsanitary living conditions.

Abandonment is the desertion of a vulnerable elder in their own home, at a hospital, clinic, shopping center or other public place. Leaving a vulnerable senior alone for many hours, days or weeks is abuse.

These are just some of the warning signs. Be on the look-out for signs of abuse and Get Involved. Stopping abuse in its tracks could save a life. See our Elder Justice Initiative website for more warning signs.

CAUSES OF ELDER ABUSE

- Ageism
- Societal attitudes
- Stereotyping of seniors
- Lack of awareness



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Slide 12: Causes of Elder Abuse

(tip--use examples of negative societal attitudes or examples of seniors such as tv shows showing seniors in a negative light, commercials, etc. Ask your audience if they can think of examples.)

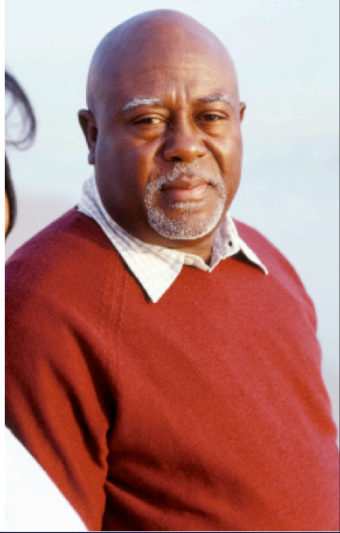
There is no one explanation for the cause of elder abuse. We know that ageism exists. This is the stereotyping of seniors as infantile, senile or lacking in capacity. Societal attitudes that abuse is a family matter, or that one should not get involved only perpetuates abuse. Ignoring the problem or pretending it doesn't exist will only increase elder abuse. Professionals and others need to educate themselves about elder abuse and spread the word. Awareness and education are the first steps in solving the problem.

Remember--Everyone ages differently. Old age does not mean Alzheimer's disease or a lack of cognitive ability. Seniors have the same rights as do all of our society.

Get Involved when you see ageism, stereotyping, situations where abuse is likely - complain or speak up to assert a seniors right to respect. Prevent elder abuse before it happens.

OTHER CAUSES OF ELDER ABUSE

- Intergenerational violence
- History of domestic violence
- Entitlement
- History of mental illness of the caregiver or the senior
- Addictions- drugs, alcohol, gambling



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Slide 13: Other Causes of Abuse

Unresolved conflicts within families can contribute to elder abuse. For Example: Sometimes the “problem child” who isn’t working ends up moving in and being the “caregiver” for the senior. The caregiver may start to take control over what the senior can and cannot do, who the senior can see, talk to, isolating the senior and begin controlling finances etc. The senior may have guilt blaming themselves for the adult child’s issues. They may be conflicted about sharing what is happening. Families that use violence to solve problems are at greater risk. Some family members may feel they are entitled to a senior’s inheritance and become controlling and abusive. Relationships where there is a history of domestic violence are at greater risk for continued abuse even as the parties age. Unfortunately, for the abused senior, they cannot bounce back from domestic violence as they may have when younger.

Settings where there is mental illness of either the caretaker or the senior provide a greater chance of abuse.

Substance abuse opens the door to all types of abuse. This could be substance abuse by either the senior or the caregiver. Addiction and the need for drugs or alcohol is an incentive to steal or harm a senior for money or property. Seniors with addictions may act out or become belligerent increasing the chance for a violent altercation. Gambling is also a form of addiction and can lead to issues, whether a senior is the gambler or a caregiver feeding their addiction by way of stealing funds.

Ignoring abuse and pretending it is a family matter will only increase the odds of it happening. Child abuse and domestic violence cases were previously treated as a family matter, but now are taken seriously. Acknowledgement of elder abuse is equally important. Keep your eyes open and watch for these types of signs. Get Involved to prevent elder abuse.

PERPETRATORS OF ELDER PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Family Members 57.9%
- Friends and neighbors 16.9%
- Home Care Aides 14.9%



Slide 14: Perpetrators of Elder Physical Abuse

There is no one profile of an abuser. Each community is different. Statistics from a study are on our slide showing that family members are most often the abusers, followed by friends and neighbors, then health care aides. Some other types of abusers are “new friends” or “new romances” such as those on the face book sweetheart scams. Be watchful for new friends who borrow money or need financial help from a senior. We mentioned earlier that substance abuse, financial problems, mental health issues, and past criminal behavior are risk factors for abusers.

PREVENTING ELDER ABUSE

- Listen to seniors
- Intervene when you suspect abuse
- Call Adult Protective Services
- Call the Ombudsman
- Call the police to make a report or do a welfare check
- Watch for signs
- Get involved



Slide 15: Preventing Elder Abuse

To Prevent Abuse--Get involved, be observant. Seniors, their friends and family should watch out for each other, whether it be at the bank, when you visit a friend, or if you see a senior who has a personality change, who is depressed or quiet when they were once happy and outgoing. Something could be wrong.

Do the following:

Listen to Seniors: give them the time and the opportunity to speak up- be respectful. Seniors have a lot to say, if given the chance.

Intervene: if you suspect abuse- check in with the senior. When suspicious of abuse, call Adult Protective Services or the police. If in a nursing home call the ombudsman, police, adult services or other relevant professional in the field.

Welfare Check: ask the police to do a welfare check on a senior you are concerned about

Watch for signs: at the bank, when visiting, at the pharmacy. Be watchful for changes in personality, strange bruises or marks, empty medicine bottles, unpaid bills and the like.

Speak up if you see abuse or even potential abuse.

TIPS FOR SENIORS

- Keep financial affairs in order
- Stay connected
- Call for help
- Get a Civil Restraining Order
- File criminal charges
- Get a cell phone or alert pendant
- Watch out for each other



Slide 16: Tips for Seniors

Seniors should remember to make sure all finances such as bank, credit card and medical statements are accurate. Keep connected to a support network of good friends and family. If there are questions or an elder needs help—reach out to the organizations in the resource list provided at the end of the presentation, call a hotline or reach out to trusted individuals like the police, doctor, or clergy. See ElderJustice.gov for more information.

If a senior does not want to file criminal charges against a family member or friend, consider applying for a civil restraining order. This is usually done at court. Each State has their own procedures for applying for a restraining order.

(Explain the procedures in your area for getting a civil protective order or restraining order or for making a police report. Is there an Elder Abuse Unit at your local police department, an elder abuse program or shelter in your area? Give resources here)

Having a cell phone to quickly call for help or wearing a pendant that has an alert button so it is easy to summon help is a great way to stay safe.

The most important thing you can do is to watch out for signs of abuse and get involved to stop it.

RESOURCES

For all types of elder abuse help, please see:

The Elder Justice Initiative elderjustice.gov

The National Center for Victims of Crime www.ncvc.org

Victim Connect Hotline 1-855-484-2846, 9am-7pm Monday-Friday

Slide 17: Resources

For all types of Elder Abuse you can go to the Elder Justice Initiative site to find help and resources. The National Center for Victims of Crime has a hot line called Victim Connect that anyone can call for information. They are available Monday through Friday.

RESOURCES

Physical Abuse Resource:

The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Psychological Abuse Resource:

National Adult Protective Services Association www.napsa-now.org

Financial Abuse Resources:

Federal Trade Commission www.ftc.gov

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau www.consumerfinance.gov/

Military Consumer Protection Day (for veterans) www.military.ncpw.gov

Slide 18: Resources

We have listed just a few resources here on each type of abuse. For seniors who are in physically abusive domestic violence situations, the National DV Hotline is available.

Psychological abuse victims can also call the same hotline if they are in a DV relationship. Other mental or psychological abuse matters may require counseling or therapy. See your local crises center or mental health programs for referrals. Adult Protective Services may also investigate some cases of psychological abuse. Please see the NAPSA site for a map of local Adult Protective Service Programs. (tip-talk about local resources for each type of abuse)

Financial abuse cases can be investigated in a variety of ways depending on the type of abuse. Local or federal law enforcement could be involved. Please see our Elder Justice Initiative Financial Exploitation page for resources. We have also listed here several government programs that specialize in financial abuse.

RESOURCES

Sexual Assault Resource:

National Sexual Violence Resource Center 1-877-739-3895

Neglect and Abandonment Resources :

Neglect in nursing homes, see map of ombudsman resources at National Consumer Voice, <http://theconsumervoice.org>

Other neglect or abandonment: see map of Adult Protective Services at The National Adult Protective Service Association www.napsa-now.org

Slide 19: Resources

In sexual assault cases the local authorities should be contacted such as 911. We have listed a hotline for sexual assault victims to call to speak to a counselor. Neglect and abandonment in nursing home can be reported to an ombudsman. To find one, reach out to the National Consumer Voice for Long Term Care. Other neglect or abandonment can be reported to the local police or the Adult Protective Services. If you don't know how to find your local APS see the map at the National Adult Protective Services Association.

CONCLUSION



Slide 20: Conclusion

Today we have learned about elder abuse, what it is, its impact, warning signs, causes and who does it. We have discussed tips for preventing and intervening in elder abuse. Please remember to review our resources and see the Elder Justice Initiative website. Get involved when you see elder abuse.

Why is this man smiling? He took the steps necessary to protect himself from Elder Abuse.

(tip- time for questions and answers and distribution of brochures and handouts)

Thank you for attending our presentation.

REFERENCES

Information for this presentation was obtained from:

- The National Center on Elder Abuse
- The National Center for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- The National Institute of Justice
- The Census Bureau
- Elder Abuse Detection and Intervention; Brandl, B.; Dyer, Bitondo, C.; Heisler, C.; Marlatt, Otto J.; Stiegel, L.; Thomas, R.
- The National Council on Aging

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- 4 Dong, X. Q., Simon, M. A., Rajan, K., & Evans, D. A. (2011). Association of cognitive function and risk for elder abuse in a community-dwelling population. *Dementia and Geriatric Cognitive Disorders*, 32(3), 209-215. DOI:10.1159/000334047
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